

# REMARKS

OF

MR. CHARLES BROWN,

OF PENNSYLVANIA,

ON THE NAVY APPROPRIATION BILL.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, MAY 29, 1842.

The House being in Committee of the Whole—  
Mr. CHARLES BROWN addressed it as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It was not my intention to address the committee on this bill again, until it should have under consideration that part of it providing for the improvement of the several navy-yards, and the increase of the navy; but, as the day is now fixed when the bill is to be taken out of the committee, and all debate to cease thereon, I feel obliged to say what I have to say while I have the opportunity, even though it shall not be strictly in order, or applicable to the amendment immediately under consideration. Much of what I shall bring before the committee has been provoked by the uncalled-for and unjustifiable attack made upon me, and the place and persons I represent, by the gentleman from the Norfolk district, in Virginia, [Mr. MALLORY,] and the gentleman from Mississippi, [Mr. GWIN.] On the part of both of these gentlemen, the attack was of the most wanton character. I have, in no part of the debate on this bill, or on any other bill, or at any time, since I have had a seat on this floor, in the most remote manner, ever referred to either of the gentlemen, or any thing connected with them, or the districts they represent! Nor have I ever referred, directly or indirectly, to the Philadelphia navy-yard, or naval asylum, or asked one dollar of appropriation for either. Why, then, have they been thus wantonly assailed? Is the gentleman from the Norfolk district not satisfied with the advantages he has so long enjoyed, and now enjoys, over all the other portions of the Union, and Philadelphia in particular? Is he not contented with the millions that have been expended in the establishment and improvement of the Norfolk navy-yard and naval asylum, and the millions upon millions that have been, and now are being, lavished upon the former, year after year, to

sustain it? Is he afraid that there is about to arise an inquiry into the reason and propriety of these large expenditures at that place, to the neglect of other places? And is he desirous of striking down the Philadelphia navy-yard still deeper, lest it should rise in judgment against him? Certainly, nothing but the fear of this could have induced that gentleman thus to have commenced a war upon the Philadelphia navy-yard and asylum. But what has he to fear? He has in the President of the United States a Virginian, who comes from near Norfolk, to give him his powerful aid. He has in the Secretary of the Navy a Virginian, who also comes from near the same place. He has in the President of the Navy Board a Virginian, and who, for some years, was the commandant of the Norfolk navy-yard. He has upon the Naval Committee of this House two members from Virginia, (and Philadelphia none;) and two on the Committee of Ways and Means, that reported this bill,—and the governor even of the Philadelphia naval asylum is a Virginian also. Surely, with all this powerful array of Virginia influence in his favor, he might have been just, if not generous, and left the Philadelphia navy-yard to that quiet repose—that sleep of death—which, for so many years, it has been suffered to enjoy. He has, however, made the attack, and I am ready to meet it; and, if the committee will give me their attention for a brief space, I will prove to them, from facts and figures, that, if the Philadelphia naval asylum is a humbug, as the gentleman from Virginia tells us it is, there are other humbugs in the country, that have cost the Government a hundred times as much, and upon which it is still expending millions, and that the Norfolk navy-yard is one of them.

But, sir, I will take up these gentlemen one at a time; and first the gentleman from Mississippi. He said that the Representatives from Norfolk and Philadelphia were contending for appropriations

for their respective navy-yards; and that they (meaning the House) would come in and take the bone from us both. He forgot, or did not know, that I had never asked any appropriation, or said aught of the Philadelphia or Norfolk navy-yards; and that the whole matter of contention was on the part of the gentleman from Norfolk; but he chose to include me in his remarks—I suppose to show his friendship. Whatever may have been his objects or his motives, I neither care nor regard; but I tell him, if he means to excite my fears, by threatening to take away appropriations to any thing in or near Philadelphia, he is much mistaken. If he will look in this bill, and all the other bills yet reported, he will find nothing to take away. So far as I have seen, there is but “*one thousand six hundred dollars*” appropriated to the navy-yard, and “*one thousand three hundred dollars*” to the asylum at Philadelphia; and this is all. There is nothing for her fortifications, her breakwater, her light-houses, her piers at Chester, Newcastle, or Reedy Island, her arsenals or her custom-house; although there ought to be, and I trust will be, appropriations to them all. Let the gentleman from Mississippi take the bone, and gnaw it, if he chooses; for there is nothing on it Philadelphia cares to retain. If these are all the appropriations we are to get, we would rather have none. But this is not the part of the remarks of the gentleman from Mississippi to which I wish mostly to reply. He charged me with advocating economy, and voting for large appropriations; and when asked to specify, gave my vote in favor of one hundred, instead of fifty thousand dollars, for completing the Boston custom-house. Yes, sir, I did give that vote. When the question was first before the House, I voted for the lesser sum; but, being in the Senate when the larger sum was inserted, and hearing the arguments there given in its favor, I was convinced it was the part of economy to make even a larger appropriation than that proposed. That custom-house has been begun, is more than three-fourths done, and must and will be entirely finished, sooner or later; and, to my mind, the sooner it is finished the better and cheaper will it be for the country. If it could all be done this year, it would be great economy to have it done. I have been taught, by experience, to believe that large sums may be expended economically, and small ones, to accomplish the same object, be wastefully expended. You may throw sand, by the shovelfull, into a breach to eternity, and the water will wash it away, and the breach continue to grow wider; while a wheelbarrow or a wagon load, timely applied, would have stopped the breach at once and forever. So it is too often with Government appropriations. We appropriate small sums to effect large objects; and the cost of superintending the expenditure of these small sums being the same as if they were ten times as large, they are all consumed and wasted in paying for their superintendence, and but little goes towards the object itself. My notions of economy differ widely from those of the gentleman from Mississippi; his, I consider, penny wise and pound foolish. He will excuse me, therefore, if I choose to take my own notions of economy in this and other matters, instead of his.

But to return to the gentleman from Virginia, with whom I have the most to do. He tells the committee that the Philadelphia naval asylum is a “humbug;” “that it is built upon a *muddy creek*, where the old sailor can see no water or vessels, and is cooped up to die with the ague, or to be tor-

mented to death by the mosquitoes.” I said, at the time these remarks were made, that there are more vessels and more tonnage pass the naval asylum on the Schuylkill, than pass the naval asylum at Norfolk, on the Elizabeth river; and although the old sailor may not have such a “waste of water” to gaze upon at the former as the latter place, he has what is equally cheering to the eye of every human being in the decline of life, beautiful landscapes, fertile meadows, and green fields, to wander among; instead of barren sands and pine woods, the only objects in view from the asylum at Norfolk, except it be a “waste of waters.” And as to the unhealthiness of the asylum on the Schuylkill, it struck me, as it did the committee, that the gentleman’s allusion was peculiarly unfortunate. Ague and fever is a disease almost unknown near Philadelphia. Some years since, for two or three years, it did visit the Schuylkill; but before, and since, it was and has been unknown. The entire healthiness of Philadelphia and its environs is too well established to be doubted by such misrepresentations. But what is the fact in relation to the Norfolk district, and, indeed, all lower Virginia? It is well known everywhere to be one of the most sickly places in the United States, and particularly subject to agues and fevers, and other autumnal diseases; and, I doubt not, if the facts were known, that a far larger proportion of old sailors have died at the Norfolk than at the Philadelphia asylum since their establishment. Whole crews of Northern vessels, I know, have died, in a few days, on the lower James river, by the fall fevers; and no prudent ship-master, or owner, will ever suffer his vessel to remain there during the months of August and September. The gentleman has made an equally new discovery in the mosquito line; and if his remarks should ever be read on the banks of the Schuylkill and the Elizabeth rivers, their inhabitants will be equally surprised; the first, to learn that they are tormented by mosquitoes; and the last, to be told that there is a place where people are tormented by mosquitoes more than they are in the swamps and marshes near Norfolk. To my certain knowledge, unless the place has changed much within a few years, there are, in the particular season, more mosquitoes, and other noxious insects, within a few miles of the naval asylum at Norfolk, than could be found in all Pennsylvania. On this question I am ready and willing to make an issue with the gentleman from the Norfolk district, before this House, or any other tribunal. But, sir, the case needs no argument. Let any one—ay, even though he be a Virginian, and God knows they have prejudices enough in favor of every thing Virginian—but look once or again upon the valley, the stream, and the “asylum” of the Schuylkill, and compare it with the asylum on the “Elizabeth,” with all that surrounds it; and say, if he can, that the former is a “humbug.” No, sir! it is, in and of itself, or in all that relates to it—its object, and its surrounding scenery and circumstances—well calculated to warm the heart and win the confidence of the “old sailor,” and of every American citizen.

The gentleman from Virginia, not satisfied with assailing the naval asylum and the Schuylkill, must needs give vent to his spite upon the Philadelphia navy-yard and the Delaware; and says that vessels built at Philadelphia are obliged to be sent to Norfolk to be completed. That such, in one or two instances, has been done, is true. But why did the gentleman take these cases, and not state the



true causes; leaving it to be inferred that, because it had been done, it was necessarily the consequence of some deficiency in the Philadelphia navy-yard, or the Philadelphia mechanics, when the gentleman knew it was neither. The Franklin, of 74 guns, was built and fitted for sea, with all her armament, in the Delaware; and so was the Guerriere frigate. It is a discovery of recent origin that vessels cannot be completed in the Delaware, and only the North Carolina and the Pennsylvania were sent to Norfolk to complete their equipments. The reason of the first I do not know; but that of the second is given by the president of the Navy Board in a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, and was, "that she could not be safely or economically equipped at Philadelphia for a cruise, on account of the depth of the water, or without exposing her to much hazard from ice." These reasons may or may not have been true; but the Franklin 74 was fully equipped for a cruise in the Delaware, and the water over the bar now is several feet deeper than it then was—it was then, I believe, eighteen feet; it is now twenty-three or more feet; and the largest ship could go over it without her guns and stores, and these might easily be taken in below the bar. But, sir, this want of water only relates to vessels of the largest class, (over 74 guns;) and we have but few of them, and I doubt if we shall ever build any more. The ice, I am aware, is an obstruction in the Delaware for two months, or three, in some years; but then few of our vessels of war come upon the coast during this season of the year, and those could go into the southern yards. This, then, is the extent of the objections to the Philadelphia navy-yard. And are there none to the Norfolk navy-yard? In a letter from the president of the Navy Board to the Secretary of the Navy, dated July 10th, 1837, in relation to taking the ship Pennsylvania to Norfolk, I find this sentence: "It was expected that she might be launched early in June, and that she might be sent to Norfolk during the mild weather of summer; in which case, she would have arrived at Norfolk at a time when she would be exposed to injury from the worms, which are destructive at certain seasons."

Now, sir, though we have "ice" in the Delaware, we have no "worms;" and if I am not much mistaken, the latter is a greater evil than the former. But, sir, I have no wish to hunt down the Norfolk navy-yard, nor any other navy-yard, nor to speak against them, only as it is necessary to contrast or compare them with that of Philadelphia; and this I intend to do more from facts than arguments.

I have here, sir, a "report from the Secretary of the Navy," dated March 1, 1841, on a "resolution of the Senate, in relation to the cost of building and repairing certain vessels," which contains "facts and figures," that will place the whole subject before the committee and the country in its true light, and expose to both the immense waste of public money that has been caused by sustaining the Norfolk navy-yard, and in building and repairing so large a number of our vessels there, instead of at Philadelphia. I give you, sir, the records of the department, and not a made-up statement to suit any particular purpose, but an official report, that cannot be explained away by any fictitious calculations or hearsay testimony. And what do they show? That, in 1818-'20, there were two ships-of-war built of equal size, and finished in like manner; that the one built at Norfolk cost "one hundred and eleven thousand five hundred and sixteen dollars" more than the one built at Philadelphia. Here,

sir, are their names, size, detailed cost, and other particulars:

Name of vessel, and where built.	Tonnage.	When built.	Number of days' labor.	Cost of labor.	Cost of materials.	Aggregate cost.
Delaware, at Norfolk	2,633	1817-'20	143,980	\$211,626	\$331,742	\$543,368
North Carolina, at Philadelphia	2,633	1818-'20	109,417	151,238	280,614	431,852
In favor of the Philadelphia yard			34,563	60,388	51,128	111,516

I would not rely upon this single statement if it stood alone; I would suppose there might be some mistake, and that there ought not to be and could not be so great a difference in the cost of vessels of the same size, and built at the same time and in the same manner, were it not that I find the same comparative difference in cost to exist in other cases at different periods of time, and in different sized vessels. I have here a table, from the same authentic document, of the cost, as of the two above named vessels, of a seven hundred ton ship built in 1826, '27, and '28, at each of the several navy-yards. It is thus stated—

Name of vessel, and where built.	Tonnage.	When built.	Cost of labor.	Cost of materials.	Total.
Concord, at Portsmouth, N. H.	700	1826-'28	\$40,679 38	\$74,646 42	\$115,325 80
Falmouth, at Boston	703	1826-'27	28,723 64	65,369 63	94,093 27
Warren, do.	691	1826.	30,350 85	69,059 16	99,410 01
Average Vincennes, at New York	700	1826	29,537 24	67,214 39	96,751 64
Fairfield, do.	700	1826	43,765 72	67,747 07	111,512 79
			35,756 58	64,733 77	100,490 35
Average St. Louis, at Washington	700	1827-'28	39,761 15	66,240 42	106,001 57
Natchez, at Norfolk	691	1827	40,716 31	61,745 64	102,461 95
Vandalia, at Philadelphia	700	1826-'28	44,009 62	62,222 57	106,232 19
			30,798 69	60,179 19	90,977 88

From this table it will be seen that a vessel of 700 tons burden, or thereabouts, in 1826-'28, cost at the following places more than at Philadelphia, viz:

	Labor.	Material.	Total.
Norfolk	\$13,210 93	\$2,043 38	\$15,254 31
Washington	9,917 62	1,566 45	11,484 07
New York	8,962 46	6,061 23	15,023 69
Boston (less labor)	1,261 45	7,035 20	5,773 75
Portsmouth	9,880 69	14,467 23	24,347 92

Everywhere, in 1826-'28, did it cost more to build a vessel of the same size and kind than it did in Philadelphia. In Boston, the cost of labor was rather less; and I believe it will be found true, as regards the work done in the navy-yards, as it is in the work done in these different places on merchant vessels, that at no two places can vessels be better built, and repaired at so little cost, as at Boston and Philadelphia; and in no places does it cost more than at Norfolk and New York; and this is fully

shown by the above table, and by numerous cases given in the report of the Secretary of the Navy. In the following table will be found enough instances to show the extraordinary cost of repairs at New York and Norfolk, in the article of labor alone; being, in some instances, double and treble that of the first cost of building the vessel elsewhere.

Vessel's name.	Where built.	When built.	Cost of labor where built.	Repairs.	Cost of labor.
				Where.	When.
Falmouth	Boston	1828	\$28,723 64	New York	1831
				New York	1834
Boston	Boston	1825	26,335 15	Norfolk	1837
				New York	1850
St. Louis	Washington	1825	40,716 31	Boston	1835
				New York	1840
Vincennes	New York	1826	43,765 72	Norfolk	1834
				New York	1839
Warren	Boston	1825	30,350 85	New York	1830
				Portsmouth	1833
				Norfolk	1838
				Norfolk	1821
				Philadelphia	1833
				Norfolk	1838
Grampus	Washington	1821	9,537 32	Norfolk	1825
				Norfolk	1828
				Norfolk	1831
				Norfolk	1836
				Norfolk	1839
				Norfolk	1826
Shark	Washington	1821	9,537 32	New York	1828
				Norfolk	1834
				Norfolk	1839

I have given, in these cases, merely the cost of labor for days' work in the first building of the vessel, and then the cost of labor each time she was repaired. I have not given the cost of material, because, in repairing a vessel, it cannot be known how much of the old material is left on the vessel. But it would not be believed, if we had not the record, that a vessel of 700 tons, which only cost, for all the labor of *building* her at Boston or Philadelphia, from \$26,000 to \$30,000, would cost for labor to *repair* her in New York, \$52,000; and in Norfolk, over \$80,000. And yet these, and other almost equally strange facts, are disclosed by the above statement, where it will be seen the cost of repairing is frequently greater than building.

But, sir, to return more particularly to a comparison of the merits of vessels built at Philadelphia and Norfolk, and to show how they have stood against time and storms. The Delaware and North Carolina, as we have seen, were both built at the same time, and are exactly of the same size. Their repairs up to this time stand thus:

Delaware, labor and material	-	\$354,132 56
North Carolina, do.	-	317,628 92
In favor of the latter	-	<u>\$36,503 64</u>

I find by the Blue Book, that the latter ship is there stated, on the 30th of September last, to be "in good order."

Again: the costs of repairs of the Natchez, of 691 tons, built at Norfolk in 1827, and of the Vandalia, of 700 tons, built at Philadelphia in 1828, are thus shown:

Natchez, to 1833	-	-	-	\$38,923 48
Vandalia, to 1834	-	-	-	25,585 77

In favor of the latter	-	-	\$13,337 71
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Thus has the Philadelphia-built seventy-four cost the Government less, to this time, than the Norfolk-built one—

On first cost	-	-	-	\$111,516 00
On repairs -	-	-	-	36,503 64

Total	-	-	-	-	\$148,019 64
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And on the sloop-of-war—

On first cost	-	-	-	\$15,254 31
On repairs to 1834	-	-	-	13,337 71

Total	-	-	-	-	\$28,592 02
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And if the first of these vessels had been allowed to be completed at Philadelphia, and both had had all their repairs there, instead of at Norfolk, the difference in favor of these two Philadelphia-built vessels over those built at Norfolk would be still greater. If the gentleman from the Norfolk district is not satisfied with the examples here given, I can, perhaps, give him more; but these will suffice to show the comparative merits and cost of vessels built at Norfolk and Philadelphia.

In the foregoing table, I have brought to the view of the committee the extravagant cost of repairs at the New York and Norfolk navy-yards, because it is at these yards, and particularly at the latter, that most of our repairs are done—costing annually, perhaps, half a million of dollars. At the last yard, too, has a dry-dock been established, at the cost of nearly a million of dollars; and it has also been fitted up with timber sheds, and workshops, and well-supplied with material; and yet, with all these advantages, the Government pays, as I have shown, one-half, double, and sometimes treble for the repairs done there, more than the same work has been or could be done for at Philadelphia. And, sir, if the Government will expend on the Philadelphia yard but the one-third of what the Norfolk yard has cost it, I will find sufficient guaranties that all its vessels shall be built and kept in repair for one third less than they now cost. Sir, as I have already said, I know it, and all know it who have any knowledge or experience in the matter, that vessels cannot be built, repaired, or fitted out at Norfolk at as little cost as they can be at Philadelphia. It does not require figures to show this. The common sense and experience of all who can understand the subject, know it well. It was a folly to put a navy-yard there; it has been a waste of public money to enlarge it as it has been, and to have so many vessels built and repaired there; and it is time the country should look at it in its true light.

The Norfolk yard has cost the Government, for improvements, since the year 1831, including the dry-dock, the sum of \$1,896,758 69; and yet the Secretary of the Navy asks for it this year the further sum of \$92,800, and the committee propose to give to it \$56,800; while the navy yard at Philadelphia has only cost the Government since 1831 \$105,133—and \$20,000 of this was paid in 1837, for ways to launch the ship Pennsylvania; and yet, notwithstanding the Legislature of Pennsylvania,



the Councils of Philadelphia, and the corporation of Southwark, in which the yard is situated, have asked for additional improvements, there is but \$1,600 in the bill for that purpose. Such conduct is insufferable—and if the same neglect, if not insult, is much longer continued, and it has already marked the course of the General Government towards the people of Philadelphia, in relation to their navy-yard and other public works at that place and on the Delaware, for some years, they will ask you to take these works away from among them altogether. For the last twelve or fifteen years, excepting, perhaps, most of the last two, the navy-yard has been an injury, rather than a benefit, to the mechanics of Philadelphia. Employment is given to them only by fits and starts. For at least ten years the navy-yard remained with closed gates, and the weeds grew where the workmen should have trodden, who were walking the streets of Philadelphia unemployed. Even then, ships were suffered to remain unfinished and decaying on the stocks. Aroused, at length, by such neglect and contempt of their interests and rights, the people of Philadelphia, and of the whole State, made a convulsive thro, and, by bringing into action their Legislature, conventions, and all the machinery of the State Government, the General Government condescended to open the yard and finish one ship. And how did it do it? Not by employing only those who were out of employment, and in such numbers as could be continued from year to year in that employment—and thus benefiting all, which they could have done, and have finished the ship long before they wanted her, for she has not gone to sea yet—but by calling into the yard hundreds upon hundreds, and thus withdrawing many from other places of employment, materially injuring the private builders and themselves, by driving work away from Philadelphia, and in a few months the work was done, and the mechanics again were unceremoniously dismissed. Five hundred men were thus, at one time, thrown out of employment. Thus has it ever been.

To make this yard beneficial to Philadelphia and to the United States, it should be enlarged, and wharfed further into the river, and be fitted up with more timber-sheds and a dry-dock, or marine railway, for the repairing of vessels, particularly steamers and sailing vessels of the size of frigates and less. This could be done at one third the amount it has cost to fit up the Norfolk navy-yard. These preparations being made, and a proper supply of material provided, and constant employment given throughout the year to an equal or nearly equal number of men, and, my word for it, the cost of building and repairing your vessels will be, as I before said, one-third less than it has been. And why not thus improve that navy-yard? What has Philadelphia done, that she should be thus neglected, and all her public works be suffered to go to decay and ruin? From her the Government has drawn millions upon millions of revenue, and never lost a dollar by any public officer in its collection. In 1840—the last year we have the account of—the receipts from customs were over a million and a half of dollars at Philadelphia; and would it be believed, that, while hundreds of thousands of dollars were appropriated at the extra session for the defences of Boston, New York, and Virginia, and hundreds of thousands are now in your naval and military appropriation bills, granted for the same and other objects at these places, not a dollar is appropriated for any thing at Philadelphia or on the Delaware, except the paltry sums for the navy-yard and naval

asylum, of twenty-nine hundred—not thousand—dollars; and this, too, when the defences of that city and harbor are defenceless—when even the piers, that were made to protect the commerce, from which your revenue is derived, from the dangers of the ice, have gone to decay, and are almost useless. What, I say again, have we done to deserve this at the hands of this Government? and what have we done that should have called forth the denunciation in advance, and the contemptuous sneer of the gentleman from the Norfolk district of Virginia, upon the character of the Philadelphia navy-yard, or the skill of her mechanics?

I know, sir—and I speak it with pain—that Philadelphia does not stand so high in the estimation of the citizens of the United States, or of the world, as she once did. I know, sir, she has fallen!—fallen, too, by the hands of her own sons! But they were not her mechanics! Her politicians and her bankers have brought disgrace and ruin upon her. But her mechanics, through all her changing fortunes, in weal or in woe, have never, for a moment, swerved from their integrity, or added a stain or a wound upon her falling reputation. Under all the oppressions and corruptions that for years the mechanics of the country have suffered, (and none have suffered more than those of Philadelphia,) they have never swerved from the faithful performance of their duty to their country and to their fellow-citizens elsewhere. Of their skill and industry, I need not speak. They are known throughout the United States and the world. Who is there in this hall, from the far South to the far West, who does not know, and has not felt, the superiority of the strength and finish of every thing made by Philadelphia mechanics? Their locomotives are the safest, the strongest, and the fastest in the world; and are found on every railroad in America—ay, and in Europe also. Their steamboats on their own Delaware have been among the fleetest and finest in the world; yes, sir, and among the fleetest and finest on the waters of the Chesapeake and the North river. Her vessels of war have been for years floating upon many seas—from South America to Russia—as specimens of her naval taste, skill, and workmanship; and none more beautiful or substantial ever floated upon the waters of any sea. And but a few days ago, who among us did not witness with pride and pleasure the noble specimen of what they had done, and what they could do, if they had but the chance, in the noble war steamer the Mississippi?

But, sir, neither the mechanics nor their workmanship need any eulogy from me; by their works they are known. Nor would I have referred to them at all, but for the attack made upon them by the gentleman from the Norfolk district of Virginia. Nor will I now, sir, attempt to draw any comparison between them and the mechanics of Norfolk; for of the latter I know but little, and I doubt if any gentleman in this House, besides the gentleman who represents that district, ever heard of the mechanics of Norfolk, or ever saw anything of their workmanship, except it may be the Government vessels they have built or repaired at so enormous a cost.

There is another point of comparison between the navy-yards at Philadelphia and Norfolk, to which I wish to call the attention of the committee especially—it is their comparative safety. In time of war, the Philadelphia navy-yard, from its distance from the sea, its location in a city of near three hundred thousand inhabitants, and in the



midst of a densely populated country, is entirely secure. While the Norfolk yard is within twenty miles or less of where an enemy might land at several points—in Lynnhaven bay and inlets, or on the Atlantic. An army might land in Lynnhaven bay, and march to the Norfolk navy-yard in a few hours time—in part of one night. As yet, there are no fortifications to defend the yard from such an attack; nor could they be erected but at a very great expenditure of money. The small population of Norfolk and Portsmouth, and the sparseness of the inhabitants of the adjoining country for a hundred miles above it, required, during the last war, as it would again if war were to ensue, that troops should be brought from the upper part of Virginia, or from the North, to defend Norfolk or the navy-yard. For a moment, let me call the attention of the committee to what was the fate of those who so patriotically came from the West to defend Norfolk, during the last war; and what would be the fate of its defenders again. The hardy sons of the mountains and valleys of Virginia, were those who marched to its defence. They encamped near Norfolk, in fine health, and with buoyant spirits. The season was not more unhealthy to its inhabitants than is usual. No epidemic prevailed; and yet, from the disease of the climate and country, nearly one-tenth of the whole number died in a short time. I appeal to the gentleman from Virginia if this is not true. The most melancholy feelings I ever had in my life, except when standing by the grave of my own kin, was when I wandered over the Potters' Field of Norfolk, and stood by the graves of those unfortunate soldiers. I counted in long rows many lying alongside of each other, members of the same company; all of whom were from twenty-one to twenty-six years of age. And there they lay, far from their homes, or the graves of their fathers and brothers—forgotten and neglected—the very rough stones, placed at their heads by their surviving comrades, broken in many instances, and far from the graves they had marked. The very place of their interment was suffered, by those they had died to defend, to become a common; and when I saw it, the cattle were trampling down, and the hogs rooting up their graves. I have understood from the gentleman from the Norfolk district that it has since been enclosed; but so it was when I saw it, a few years ago. At that time, too, immediately alongside of the neglected graves of those defenders of Norfolk, was an elegantly ornamented cemetery, where slept, in splendid tombs, many of the citizens of Norfolk, whose property had been saved at the expense of the lives of those unfortunate and forgotten mountaineers. But, sir, my object is not to create prejudice against the living citizens of Norfolk, or sympathy for the dead volunteers of Virginia; but merely to show the character of the means of defending the Norfolk navy-yard in time of war, and how doubtful they are. The one campaign during the late war, in defence of Norfolk, was more destructive of life, through the unhealthiness of the place, than were the crossing of the Alps and all the battles of one of Napoleon's most bloody campaigns in Italy. Norfolk, I am well aware, is well defended by water; but, by land, it is the most exposed and most defenceless place in the United States. I have gone further, Mr. Chairman, into this matter, than I intended; my object being not to bring before the committee the manifold advantages of the Philadelphia navy-yard and naval asylum over those of Norfolk, but merely to vindicate the form-

er from what I considered unjust aspersions, attempted to be cast upon them by the gentleman from the Norfolk district. Having done this, I leave this part of the subject with the committee.

But, sir, I cannot sit down without recurring to what I am told was the real cause of the gentleman from Virginia assailing the Philadelphia establishments. It is said, though I can hardly believe it, that my remarks a few days since, in relation to the recent appointments in the navy, were what caused the gentleman's ire to be aroused. I said nothing then against his Virginia President, or his Virginia Secretary of the Navy, nor any other person or thing Virginian. I did not blame the Secretary of the Navy that so very extraordinarily large a proportion of those appointments should have been made from Virginia; nor did I blame any Virginian, or Virginia herself, for these appointments, or for the large share her sons everywhere enjoy of the honors and offices of the country. I spoke of the Virginia character then, as I have always done, and as I have always felt it deserved to be spoken of—with commendation. I spoke, also, of the character of the Secretary of the Navy, as I felt, and now feel, that officer deserves to be spoken of—with the highest commendation and praise. No man connected with this Administration has more my confidence in his ability and integrity; and I have every reason to believe he is favorably disposed towards the interests of those I represent; and will, as far as he can, do them justice. He may, in the present peaceable aspect of our country, with an embarrassed treasury, be disposed to spread too much sail upon our navy; but all will agree that his aims are noble, and his capacity and energy equal to their consummation. Nor did I cast any censure upon him for not giving more of the appointments in the navy to Pennsylvania. I only gave the facts, and stated, then, that the same inequality in the appointments had always existed; that it was not more the fault of this than of other Secretaries; and that the fault was always more in the members of Congress than on others. It is ourselves, not I, for I have set my face against this central influence and favoritism—but many of those who hear me, who are to blame. Too many members of Congress recommend and urge the appointment of those who live in this city, or who come here by themselves, or friends, to importune for office, to get clear of their importunities; and the Secretary too often appoints them to get clear of our importunities.

It was this central influence that I depreated—an influence that had filled, and was filling, all the offices of Government, and most of the navy and army, from the States of Virginia, Maryland, and this District. I stated, then, that there was a greater number of appointments in the navy made during the last year, from these three places alone, than from all the Northern and Western States together, and more than double as many as from all the other Southern States. This I said was not just—was not right; and I am sorry my exposé of it should have provoked the ire of the gentleman from Norfolk, or any other Virginian. While I am on this subject, I would say there is another rule promulgated and acted upon by the Secretary of the Navy, and which he says is "the established rule of the office," against which I enter my solemn protest: it is, that, in making selections, "the sons of navy officers, and the descendants of patriots who had rendered service to the country in military or civil life, were preferred, without regard to their local position." This doctrine, condemned as

it has been by the Revolutionary patriots themselves—by Washington and Franklin—is at war with all our institutions, and, if carried out, will lead to the destruction of all political equality, and to the establishment of a privileged class, so dangerous to freedom, and odious to freemen. In this country, thank God! we are all on an equal footing—at least we are all born equal. The son of the poor undistinguished man is equal to the son of the rich distinguished one; the son of the private citizen equal to that of the “public officer.” No child is here punished for his father’s crimes, nor ought any to be rewarded for his father’s virtues; both are alike, in the eye of our Government, each to be punished for his own crimes, and each to be rewarded for his own merits and virtues; and it is right it should be so. Brave and virtuous fathers have had but too often cowardly and vicious sons, while poor and ignorant and vile fathers have had sons that have done honor to their race and their country. Besides, look at the application of this rule. In the appointment of midshipmen now, it requires great influence to get one appointed. You, Mr. Chairman, nor I, have sufficient influence—members of Congress though we be—to get one boy, how great soever may be his merit, appointed. This appointment, now bestowed, through favoritism, on a boy without any more, or, perhaps, of less merit than a thousand others, gives him at once a liberal income and an honorable station for life, and opens the way to him for imperishable renown. From all this the unsuccessful candidate is now and forever excluded. Here one would think we should stop. But this rule goes farther; it transmits the good fortune of the successful candidate to his sons and his sons’ sons, widening and strengthening as it descends; while it also transmits the misfortune of the unsuccessful candidate to his posterity in like manner. This is doubly unjust.

But more than this. Those who are now appointed midshipmen, some twenty years hence will be the captains and commanders of your navy. How then will it stand, should we be in war? Not as it did during the last war. Then, a Bainbridge and a Lawrence from New Jersey—a Decatur and a Stewart from Pennsylvania—a Hull from Connecticut—a Perry from Rhode Island—a McDonough and a Jones from Delaware, and a Porter from Massachusetts—bore your flag in triumph through the battle and the breeze; but ere long, if appointments are to be made as they have been, that flag will be borne only by the sons of Virginia, or of Maryland, or of the District of Columbia; and the world will think none others are worthy to bear it. How is it even now? Besides the Secretary of the Navy and the president of the Navy Board being Virginians, of your seven squadrons *three* are commanded by Virginians, *two* by Marylanders, and but *one* by a Jerseyman, and *one* by a Pennsylvanian; but this Pennsylvanian, though the last, and commands but the “home squadron,” would be at home in command of any squadron; and his well-earned fame in defence of his country and his country’s flag is equal at home or abroad to the proudest of any of the sons of Virginia or Maryland.

But to return to these appointments. I say this rule of giving preference to sons of naval officers smacks too much of European hereditary titles, is anti-republican, and ought to be abolished at once; and all the appointments in the navy and army be made from all parts of the country alike, from those most meritorious and best

qualified for the station, without regard to who were their fathers. This will secure us the best officers, and in peace and in war will more closely bind us together as one people, and make all feel an equal interest in the welfare of our common country, and the glory and honor of its navy and army.

[Mr. Wise explained the rule relative to appointments, and the manner they had been made.]

Mr. Brown said the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. Wise] was mistaken in point of fact, both as to the rule and the appointments. From the report of the Secretary of the Navy, it appeared that, of the midshipmen appointed during the last year, there were born in

Maine	-	-	5
Vermont	-	-	2
Massachusetts	-	-	8
Connecticut	-	-	4
New York	-	-	15
New Jersey	-	-	1
Pennsylvania	-	-	13
Delaware	-	-	2—50
Maryland	-	-	17
Virginia	-	-	34
District of Columbia,	-	-	20—71
North Carolina	-	-	6
South Carolina	-	-	3
Georgia	-	-	6
Louisiana	-	-	2
Mississippi	-	-	1
Florida	-	-	1—19
Tennessee	-	-	1
Kentucky	-	-	7
Ohio	-	-	3
Missouri	-	-	1—12
Unknown	-	-	12—12

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Now, sir, I submit if this is not laying it a little too thick on Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. But the gentleman says that the very large proportion of appointments previously made in the navy were made by Secretaries from Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Admitting the fact, I think a Virginia Secretary might have returned the compliment by giving some more to Pennsylvania, and not by taking a still larger proportion from his own State. The Pennsylvania Secretaries cannot be charged with any such partiality for their own people. But to return to the rule in relation to appointments at large. The rule gave the preference not *first* to the “sons of meritorious officers of the Revolution and the late war,” but to the sons of “naval officers” generally; and, secondly, to the sons of distinguished patriots, civil and military; but both and all were nearly alike objectionable. And as to the appointments themselves, he had them before him; and what did they show to be the fact? That of the thirty-two midshipmen, appointed at large, as it is called, during the last year, fifteen were from Virginia, eight from Maryland, four from the District of Columbia, and none from Pennsylvania; and of the other appointments, there is every reason to believe that many of them are from Virginia and this District, though they hail from other States. Is it not singular, and not a little strange, that nearly *all* the “naval officers,” or “distinguished patriots,” or “those who did meritorious service in the Revolutionary or late wars,” should live in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia? and, for one, I should like to know who the distinguished fathers of these fortunate and



favorite sons are? I had hoped we had at least *one* who deserved to be so considered in Pennsylvania.

Nor is the gentleman any more correct in his allusion to the Treasury Department, in the share that Pennsylvania has there in the offices. In the Treasury Department, and in the other departments, he will find, by reference to the Blue Book, that there were there in September last—

States.	Treasury.	War.	P. Office.
From Virginia - - -	54	15	8
From Maryland - - -	79	26	12
From District of Columbia -	55	12	5
From Pennsylvania - -	45	4	4

Thus, it appears that Virginia has more even in the Treasury Department than Pennsylvania. Indeed, wherever you look, you will find the same result; that a very large proportion of the appointments, and by far too large, are made from Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia; and, in the main, the disinterested patriots of Virginia are mostly in the front ranks, and not behind her neighbors in numbers. To show this more clearly, I have taken from the table read to the House a few days since by the gentleman from Kentucky, [Mr. UNDERWOOD,] and which, I presume, was compiled from the Blue Book, an abstract of the whole number of officers in the navy, army, and civil departments of the Government, from Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, and Pennsylvania, with the federal population of each. I have taken as the civil list only those in the general service of the United States, and not those who are appointed as revenue and other officers in the several States. The account stands thus:

States.	Federal population.	Number in navy.	Number in army.	Number in civil departments.
Virginia - - -	1,060,202	188	197	205
Maryland - - -	434,124	125	116	230
District of Columbia -	41,834	41	45	150
Total - - -	1,536,160	354	358	585
Pennsylvania - - -	1,724,007	148	137	220

There is rather too great a difference here, I think, to be just to Pennsylvania; and she is much better off than many of the other States.

I would advise the gentleman from Virginia to say as little about this matter as possible; for the further it is examined, the more it will show the disparity in the dispensation of the favors of the Government, and the necessity there exists for a better regulation of the exercise of the appointing power, and particularly in regard to the military and naval appointments. For it cannot be denied that there are as many men and boys in Pennsyl-

vania as ready and able to serve their country, as in Virginia; and, indeed, in any one State as in another; and the offices and favors of the Government ought, like the dews of Heaven, to fall on all alike. I have not, however, instituted this comparison with a view to wage war upon Virginia, or anywhere else. I alluded to it at first accidentally; and but for the attack made upon me and mine by the gentleman from the Norfolk district, and the allusion just now made to the number of Pennsylvanians in the Treasury Department by another gentleman, [Mr. WISE,] I would not have returned to it again, or have extended my remarks upon it as far as I have.

I will detain the committee but a moment longer; and that will be to close my account with the gentleman from the Norfolk district, now, and I hope forever; for I have no taste for these criminalizing and recriminating discussions, and will never engage in them, but in self-defence. He refers to the Schuylkill, in tones of contempt, as "a muddy creek," infested with disease and poisonous insects. I admit its banks are muddy. But its valley is one of the richest and loveliest that the eye of man ever rested upon; and its waters are as pure as ever flowed from crystal fountain—and that is what cannot be said of any water near Norfolk. It is no mean, poverty-stricken stream, like that on which the gentleman's asylum and navy-yard are situated. It does not run through barren sands a few miles, and end in a dismal swamp, with nothing growing on its banks but stunted pines, or feeding on its fields but ragged sheep. It flows through the most highly-cultivated portion of these United States; on its luxuriant pastures graze thousands of as fine cattle as the world can produce; and the source of its pure and healthful waters is in mountains from which are taken millions of dollars worth of minerals annually. Along its shores dwell as honest, as intelligent, as patriotic, and as happy a people as the sun ever shone upon, and very unlike the cadaverous idlers to be found upon the Elizabeth river and Deep creek in Virginia.

Nor are the sons of the valley of the Schuylkill unknown to fame. That valley, leaving out Philadelphia, has given to the world philosophers, artists, and heroes of the highest order. There were born and raised a Rittenhouse; a West, and a Wayne. The first, in science and philosophy, exceeded only by Franklin; the second gave a new character to the new world throughout the old, by the brilliancy of his genius, and the perfection of his execution as an artist; and Wayne has left a name and a fame, purchased by many a hard and well-fought battle with British and savage foes, that are enough in themselves to secure the respect of any true American for the valley of the Schuylkill.

And if we go from the Schuylkill to the Delaware, we will find its shores eloquent with the names of statesmen, soldiers, philanthropists, and men of the highest regard in every pursuit of life, and sparkling with the brightest gems of American chivalry. Keeping within the line of the navy alone, and leaving behind us the names of a Truxton, a Biddle, and other naval heroes of the Revolution, we find a Bainbridge, a Decatur, a Lawrence, a MacDonough, a Stewart, a Jones, and a Porter, coming up from the waters of that river to do battle upon the ocean, in defence of that country which now neglects, and would asperse the place of their birth or their home. But, sir, their glorious deeds have proved that other than Virginians can command victoriously your navy, and have forever secured to them, and the streams from whose banks they were taken, an immortality of fame that the best names and the fairest rivers of Virginia might well be proud of. No, sir, the muddy Schuylkill and the shallow Delaware, as they are termed by the gentleman from the Norfolk district of Virginia, are not unknown streams, nor do an unknown people dwell upon their borders. Nor, sir, is Philadelphia—neglected as she has been by the General Government, and disgraced, and wronged, and wellnigh ruined, as she has been by some of her own financiering sons—any mean city. She has grown up without your aid, and in despite of the wrong inflicted upon her; and she will continue to grow and flourish, though she may never get a dollar of your appropriations, and be, what she always has been, the happy abode of as many true-hearted men and lovely women as any city of her size on the face of the globe.

She asks—nay she demands at your hands but justice—that justice which you mete out to other parts of the United States. She asks you to maintain, as you ought to maintain, your own establishments that you have made upon her soil, for your use or her defence, and not suffer them to go to decay, to her injury and your injury. Every other State or city in the Union can obtain this justice without coming, as a mendicant, to your doors to beg for it. How long Philadelphia will continue to ask as a boon, what she ought to demand as a right, time will show. But, as one of her Representatives, I will never submit to have insult added to injury, without exposing the one and repelling the other.